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ABSTRACT

The document presents a formative evaluation of the program development process used to produce the 13 kits in the Canadian Content Project. The objective is to recommend whether similar development models should be used in the future. The study is presented in three sections. Section I examines and compares three approaches to local program development: hierarchical, random, and mutualistic. Decision making rests with the curriculum expert in the hierarchial approach; with the individual or group constructing the program in the random approach; and to some extent with all the participants in the mutualistic approach. These are discussed in relation to various aspects of decision making, including locus of power; role of teachers, students, and community personnel; major concern; legitimization; and expected outcomes. Section II examines the Canadian Content Project in relation to the decision to use the mutualistic approach. It outlines objectives and plans relating to rights of team members, advantages for team members, obligations of team members, and assumptions about team members. The major portion surveys the perceptions of the teacher members of the teams about the realities of working on the project. Most of the respondents believed their expectations had been fulfilled, but less than one-third indicated willingness to participate in such a project again under the same conditions. The major finding was that the mutualistic approach was not implemented because it was not understood by the participants. Section III summarizes the study and offers five points to be considered in the future when using a mutualistic approach. (CK)

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ALBERTA EDUCATION, MUTUALISM, AND THE CANADIAN CONTENT PROJECT

Submitted to:

Alberta Education,
The Government of Alberta

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SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Purpose

The purpose of the study was:

a) to determine whether the program development model used in the Canadian Content Project has been effective in producing quality materials; and

b) to recommend whether similar development models should be used in the future.

The results of the study directed toward the first question are reported elsewhere (D. Massey and W. Werner, Canadian Content Kits: An Assessment. University of Alberta, 1977.) This report is directed toward the second question and consists of a formative evaluation of the program development process used to produce the thirteen Canadian Content Kits.

Procedures

A number of techniques for obtaining information related to the effectiveness of the process of program development were designed and used in the study:

1. A survey for obtaining assessments from each of the development team members was constructed. (Appendix 1).
2. A survey for obtaining assessments from Alberta Education social studies and selected media consultants was constructed. (Appendix 2).
3. Interviews with development team members, selected school trustees, and selected Alberta Education consultants were structured.
4. Background correspondence and documents related to the project were analyzed.

The study was completed over a seven month period from January 4th, 1977 to July 10th, 1977 .

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SECTION I PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES

Which is a better program development approach to provide students with quality instructional materials? What are fundamental elements of program development? How should existing procedures be improved? What role should individuals involved in such projects fulfill?

Many of the ideas, theories and models which have been used to produce school programs have their origins in fields other than education. This borrowing of ideas from the military, industry, business, and from other areas outside of education, as well as the underlying perspectives inherent in these sources, have rarely been made explicit. Fa lure to identify the source of developmental approaches may l ad to unexpected consequences. It also raises the question as to whether educators should borrow at all.

The models of curriculum development which constitute the official wisdom within educational lite ature provide little guidance to program development in local situations. They represent the reconstructed logics of theoreticians rather than the logics in use which are a part of development activities. Their clean lines miss the hopes and fears, the messiness, sublties, and uncertainties experienced while developing programs with various groups. In spite of these models, local program development occurs as a social process and as a largely practical activity in the everyday world of schools. For participants its tasks remain for the most part unquestioned, common-sense, and taken-for-granted activities through which programs are produced suitable for everyones' purposes at hand. As such, there is no one definition or model of what constitutes an approach to local program development. The approach varies

wherever it is implemented and experienced. Its definition in part emerges within the process itself. The everchanging pattern is like oil on water, for not only does the shape and logic of the method shift over time within any one project, but also among various projects. Much depends upon the perspectives and experiences of the participants, the constraints of the local situation, the nature of the subject matter. In other words, approaches to local program development are never the same in any two times and places. They remain largely situation specific.

It is possible, however, to tease out some of the general characterisitics of three very general approaches to local program development in relation to one another. These approaches can be differentiated on the basis of at least one common variable--decision making. Central to any approach to program development is the making of decisions regarding what is to be taught and how it is to be taught. What differs among them is the mechanism for making these decisions. Following is a summary chart and a discussion of some of the ideal aspects of decision making as it tends to characterize local program development. Three generalized styles of development are presented in order that they be clarified through comparison. The styles outlined are (1) hierarchical, (2) random, and (3) mutualistic.

APPROACHES TO LOCAL CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

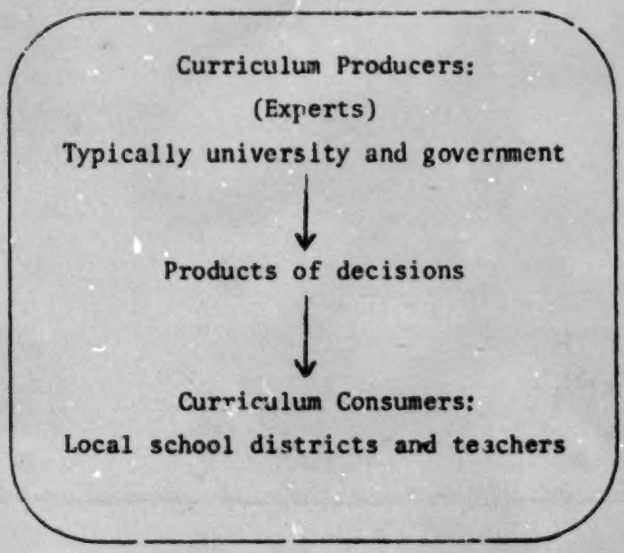
	Hierarchical	Random	Mutualistic
Locus of power in decision making	Centralized: Focused in curriculum experts. Unidirectional and hierarchical control over all decisions.	Individualized.	Decentralized. Shared among participants. Mutual control of decisions.

Role of teachers, students, community personnel in decision making	Consumers or advisors.	Not specified.	Co-producers. Broad base of participation in decisions. Grass roots movement.
Major concern in decision making	Efficiency; Maintenance of central power and control.	Individualized.	Programs which have meaning and acceptance in local situations.
Legitimization of decision making	The developer's expertise and institutional affiliation.	Personal or local interests.	Open and public nature of curricula.
Expected outcomes of decision making	Certainty of predefined outcomes. Ends control means.	Uncertainty and divergent outcomes.	Emergent and defined by consensus. Ends and means change en-route.

Hierarchical Approach

A hierarchical approach is the most commonly used method for developing school programs. The locus of power in decision making rests with the curriculum expert, usually defined by his governmental or university affiliation. These experts select and order the goals, content, and activities which they consider relevant to students. Power is not shared with teachers, students, community, or minority groups. As a consequence, programs are developed "outside", apart from the concerns and interests of local situations, and are handed down as products to consumers in a unidirectional fashion. Decision making moves from the top downwards with the local teacher and community groups having little control over what is studied, how it is studied, and from whose point of view. The legitimate frame of reference used is

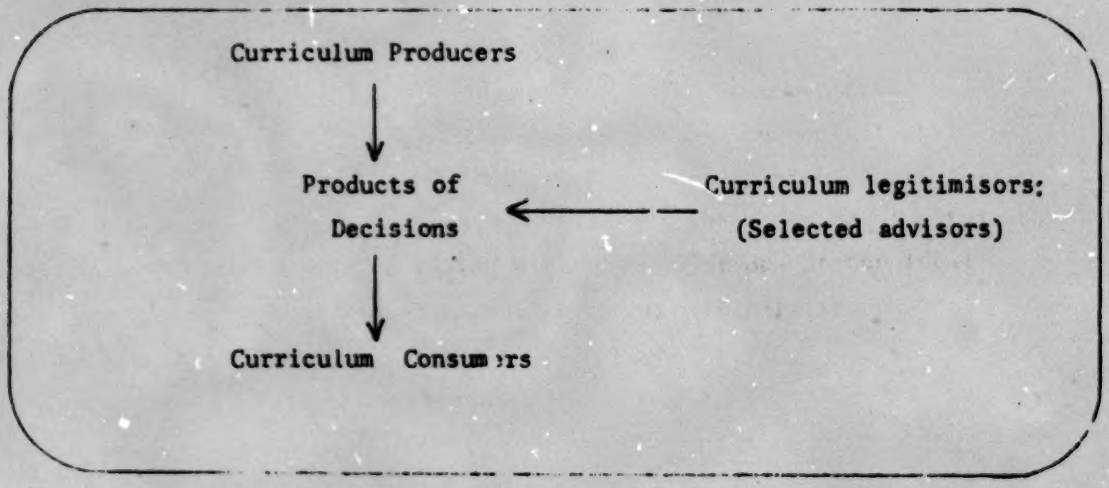
defined by experts alone.



A major interest underlying this approach is efficiency in decision making and control of the knowledge and perspectives students are given concerning the issues under study. Conclusions are unidirectionally shaped for and transmitted to the student and teacher, who in turn are expected to legitimize those values and interpretations. It is the curriculum as given to them which dispenses the proper information for the student and for his community. The relationship between curriculum experts and community is such that the goals and reality of the expert are placed upon all for whom the program is designed.

Although this is the most common approach taken to program development, some departments of education share a limited amount of their power with other interest groups. The locus of power in decision making concerning the content and aims of a program still rests with the experts, although community personnel may be invited to cooperate with the department in an advisory fashion. Power is distributed to selected representatives of teachers, parents, and community groups who are invited to be members of an advisory committee. Although this may represent a small degree of decentralization of power in decision making

the locus of control in deciding what should be taught still rests with the experts. The role of the invited personnel is advisory, presenting their criticisms and appraisals on an ad hoc basis.

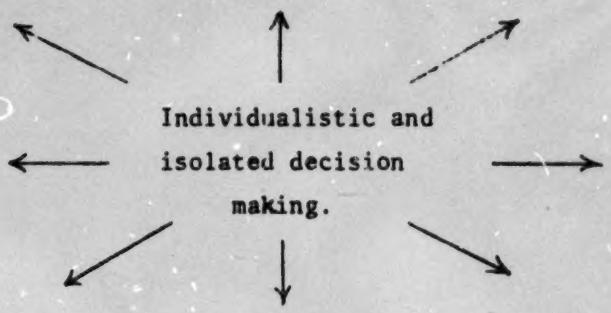


A major interest underlying this approach is that of legitimization. A degree of consensus is achieved with selected representatives of local groups who give their approval to the program. However, it is important to note that this cooperation does not represent a shift in the decision making base. The role of community personnel is strictly advisory. It is a political move on the part of experts to gain increased legitimizations for their product. Once this cooperation results in legitimization, the curriculum is transmitted unidirectionally and hierarchically to the consumers.

Borrowed from business and industry, this approach as used by educators violates one of the basic assumptions of the original model--the assumption of consumer choice. In the world of commerce it was expected that the consumer could reject the product. In the case of programs for schools authorized by departments of education this is not the case.

Random Approach

The random approach is also a commonly used method for developing programs especially at the local level. The locus of power in decision making rests with the individual or group constructing a program. They select goals, content, and activities without much consideration for congruence with provincial curriculum handbooks or guidelines, for overall scope and sequence in relation to other programs, for overlap with other grade levels, or for the relevance of the program in other than their own local situation. Power may or may not be shared with various groups at the local level, and contact may or may not be made with experts.



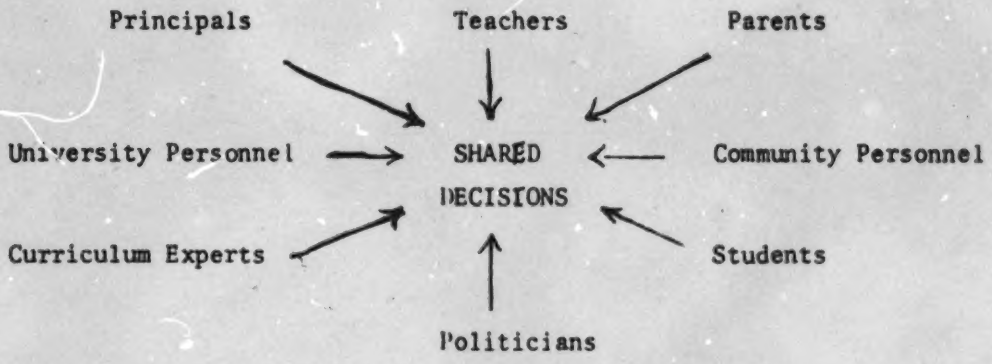
The strength of this approach is that it often allows individuals or groups to pursue their special interests without being hampered by external criteria, time lines, or consensus. This individualized and isolated decision making allows individuals to develop themselves and their own relevances.

There are many difficulties encountered when a random approach is employed in local curriculum development. The program may be developed in a haphazard fashion as each team member does his or her own thing. If many programs are constructed in this way, the result is a curriculum cafeteria; there may be little fit or overall sequence among programs. Programs are often localized in their application and interest because of the lack of overall

co-ordination of the development process. The process may also be costly in terms of human effort, finances, and misundertandings which require post-development work to rectify.

Mutualistic Approach

The locus of power in mutualistic program development is shared to some extent with all the participants. Although control often ultimately lies with the government department or agency funding the local program production, there is an attempt to gain a broad base and degree of involvement in the process. The direction is toward the devolution of power the decentralization of control. Decision making is shared among all those who participate; teachers, students, community personnel, trustees, minority groups, university and curriculum experts.



Since the locus of power in decentralized decision making is shared, the relationship among developers tends toward mutual influence and understanding rather than dominance by one group. Curricular decisions are no longer hierarchical and unidirectional as in a producer-consumer approach. This means that an entire province is not treated as a homogenous group which should accept as their goals the interpretations as defined by the curriculum experts. Flexibility and freedom within the developmental process allow for and encourages heterogeniety because the

decisions are made from the broad base of local involvement and interests.

The overriding and guiding principle in mutualistic program development is clear: each person comes to the task with expertise to contribute, with relevances to satisfy, and with obligations to fulfill. Together they are co-producers of the program. Teachers, students, school administrators, trustees, minority groups, consultants, parents and other community personnel bring not only an interest in what goes on in classrooms, but their own particular skills and expertise. They work together to produce something that is better than any one group or individual alone could achieve. This does not mean that each group has the same expertise and interest to contribute, nor that each group is expected to do the same tasks equally. Rather, the richness of experiences, the variety of viewpoints, the different kinds of skills, the divergent relevances and interests, and the interplay of ideas are channeled into a shared goal, that of producing a quality program. No one group is considered to be more important than any other group. It is recognized that each contributes something different to the task. Variation of understanding and input can be expected from the various groups depending upon the task at hand. However, unless this major principle is recognized high levels of frustration and confusion may be experienced by all of the participants.

For example, students may not understand the technical mechanics of actually putting a program together, but they do have expertise to offer concerning the relevance and clarity of questions posed in that program. Parents, trustees, and other community members bring another kind of expertise and concern to program development. They have the broader political and social concerns which help ensure that a program is acceptable within the values, goals, and history of a community. Government and university members,

along with sundre curriculum and media consultants, bring the technical expertise needed to put a quality program together. Time and resource constraints, acceptable formats, logistical aspects of the classroom, the abilities and expectations of students, as well as the attitudes held by their fellow-teachers are the common-sense knowledge which teachers can bring to program development. Often it is upon these taken-for-granted factors which the various groups have to offer in curriculum development that a program is successfully accepted and implemented within a classroom and community.

Variation can be expected in the degree of cooperation solicited initially from schools, parents, students, administrators, teachers, and representatives of teacher associations when a mutualistic approach is proposed. And even when the decentralization of curriculum decision making is implemented, the participation of the various interest groups will vary over the project. It takes a skillful chairman who is astute to the political and interpersonal processes within the group to coordinate the various individuals together on the task.

There are a number of practices which do not characterize mutualism. Mutualism does not mean that a student or parent is made a token member of a group for window-dressing purposes. Nor does it involve community personnel as simply advisors or legitimisors of what is done. University experts or curriculum consultants do not become ex officio members of the working group. A group of teachers, or anyone else for that matter, do not develop the program themselves and then represent it as a group effort to consumers. Everyone is involved and takes responsibility for what is done.

The underlying interest of this form of curriculum development is not primarily that of establishing predetermined outcomes or achieving efficiency in developing programs. Rather, the interest

is in programs which have increased meaning and relevance to those who use them in local situations. It is an attempt to build the relevances of various groups into the program. As such, focus and goals are not established by government experts totally apart from community interests, but emerge out of the concerns and needs of both the departments of education and the community, as well as from the classroom. The result is a curriculum which has more acceptance in local situations and which is relevant to the various experiences and views within a pluralistic society.

Mutualistically developed programs are based upon a belief that those who are affected by decisions should be involved in making those decisions. The concerns of experts are often disciplinary based, and different from the interests of other groups. As a result the programs developed hierarchically by experts are either never accepted and implemented, or are changed considerably by teachers in order to make the programs more relevant. Unless teachers and students find a program relevant to their interests and needs, and within their frames of reference, it has little chance of survival.

A further belief underlying a mutualistic approach is that the best interests of society in general, as well as of local communities, can be served satisfactorily through a consortium of groups rather than through any one group making the curricular decisions. In this manner educational concerns and decisions are kept open and public. For example, local industry may tend to produce program materials primarily in their own interests rather than in the public interest. But the broad base needed to assure the public interest in school is provided if teacher, parent, student, industry, university, government department, and various interest groups are involved in decisions. This approach may be likened to that of a Royal Commission which attempts to bring out into the open, and incorporate, the variety of opinions which may be

expressed on issues which affect the whole society. Likewise, education is too important a matter to the society to let any one interest group make all decisions from their own narrow viewpoint.

In reality, those groups who have access to program development have the power to define social reality and to impose these definitions upon other groups. This means that certain individuals and groups have the power to control the thinking of students and of teachers by shaping conceptions of the society in which they live. In this way program developers become the gate-keepers of reality definitions. They select, classify, and evaluate viewpoints and knowledge for inclusion within programs. Certain perspectives are legitimized to the exclusion of other points of view. Such gate-keeping represents an unequal distribution of power among groups with schooling contexts because everyone does not have equal power to control the content of curricula. Curricula transmit and distribute selected interpretations of social issues. Implications of this power and control for curriculum developers are not simple within a pluralistic society such as Canada. Though schools are in general a meeting place of diverse experiences and views on social issues, it appears that the experiences and views of only certain groups are selected and transmitted within programs.

This distribution of power among groups can be traced to the particular approach used in curriculum development by departments of education. The hierarchical and random approaches allow for the unequal sharing of power among groups in the ability to control the thinking of students. On the other hand, the mutualistic approach tends to distribute more evenly this power of curricula decision making. Mutualism promotes open and public decision making.

SECTION II: THE CANADIAN CONTENT PROJECT

The approach defined initially by Alberta Education and prescribed for the thirteen teams was labelled "mutualism", "co-activity", and "decentralization". It was agreed upon in principle that parents were to be involved in appropriate ways with teams of teachers in the tasks of producing Canadian content kits. (Canadian Content Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee, November 20, 1975). Later on, the list of appropriate personnel was expanded to include students, parents, governmental consultants, local resource people, and representatives from teacher associations. Developmental procedures were defined simply as being co-active and mutualistic (Canadian Content Ad Hoc Curriculum Committee, January 19, 1976). The mutualistic approach was to be encouraged as the conceptual guide for kit development.

The mutualistic approach was made very explicit within the contracts written for each developmental team. Each of the thirteen contractor teams agreed to develop the units under specific conditions. Teachers, students, and parents were to be jointly involved in developing the kits, and were "to work in a co-active, mutualistic mode". Although mutualistic, co-active, and decentralization were three qualifying terms used continuously by Alberta Education personnel in describing this curriculum development process, definitions never seem to have been made clear to all participants.

In part the objectives of this approach were to develop and test for Alberta Education an alternative way of producing programs (A Proposal for Program Development in Canadian Studies, page 4).

Claims were made that this decentralized process and co-active approach were not only very different from the usual methods employed by Alberta Education in constructing programs, but also that the method may "prove to be a viable alternative to other types of curriculum development" (Alberta Education's Canadian Content for the Social Studies Project, page 3). The format and some of the necessary tasks involved in such an approach were to be tried in the hope that they could be utilized again in the future.

Support and legitimization for such an approach to program development were building over quite a period of time. The idea of a mutualistic style had its conceptual roots and impetus in a number of events. Mutualism had been conceptualized and advocated in the writings of university and government scholars such as M. Maruyama, T. Aoki, D. Ledgerwood, and R. Sabey. There were examples within both Alberta and the Northwest Territories of this approach in local program development. Alberta Education's program handbooks for the social studies (Experiences in Decision Making and Responding to Change) seem to support and even to require local involvement in program development. Impetus to mutualistic styles came further through a government sponsored curriculum conference (Red Deer, 1975) and through the assessment of the Alberta Social Studies Program (Downey, 1975). Both the conference and the Downey report recommended that teachers, students, and parents be involved in the task of constructing curriculum. The call for increased participation of both professional and lay people in this basic educational task was a strong legitimization for implementing a mutualistic approach to local program development.

What Was To Be

> Society must be considered not as a hierarchy of function but as a system in which free forces are in equilibrium based on the enjoyment of equal rights in exchange for the discharge of equal obligations and the enjoyment of equal advantages in exchange for the performance of equal services. (Pierre Proudhon, De la capacite politique).

Proudhon's notions can be usefully applied in clarifying the mutualistic approach that was to be taken in developing the Canadian Content Kits. The development of any program is largely a social activity; its task accomplished by a group of individuals who have various perceptions, roles, and interests. The groups to be involved in the Canadian Content Kit Project included: (1) Alberta Education, (2) Trustees, (3) Parents, (4) Students, and (5) Teachers. A group conspicuous by their absence were (6) Content Consultants. As group members they were to have certain rights, enjoy certain advantages, and to fulfill particular obligations, in carrying out the group's intents.

Rights of Team Members

A key concern which needed to be addressed in the project related to the rights of the participating group members. By definition each group was considered to have equal rights including the right to veto, the right to chair the group, the right to contribute their expertise, and the right to participate in the decisions that were made. The recognition of equal rights was critical to the program development model.

Advantages for Team Members

One of the greatest pay-offs of mutualistic program development is participant satisfaction. Members were expected to gain a sense of involvement and power. They would develop a strong commitment to the program and recognize the worth of their involvement. If successful they would identify with the process, the program products, and their egos would become in part defined by what they had done.

Obligations of Team Members

For the mutualistic approach to work successfully each group would have certain obligations. These obligations included:

CONSULTANTS-ALBERTA EDUCATION

Provide information on research findings related to the task

Provide progress reports to team members on research underway

Describe experiments and pilot programs in other school systems

Offer alternate approaches to solving problems

Interpret trends in the social studies

Monitor the educational quality of the materials being produced

MINISTER, DEPUTY MINISTER, DIRECTORS-ALBERTA EDUCATION

Point out applicable policy regulations

Contact groups that may assist

Help to formulate evaluation techniques

Provide additional sources of information

Assist in arranging help from outside school systems

Coordinate projects

Recognize the project through press releases, conferences, and publications

Monitor the educational quality of materials being written

Arrange for the production and distribution of the final product

Provide adequate time and financial resources for the project

Clarify the project parameters, purpose, and model for all participants.

TRUSTEES

Provide teams with input as to community

Ensure that materials are within the history and goals of the community

PARENTS

Supply information as to the appropriateness of material

Ensure that the materials are within the history and goals of the local community

To ensure adequate time and financial resources for the project

Recognize the project through special board and public meetings

To write parts of the unit

To help locate appropriate resource personnel and material in the community

To write parts of the unit

STUDENTS

To check the relevance and clarity of program materials and instructional strategies

To react to materials in terms of readability, interest, length

To assess what will and what will not "work" with fellow students

To write parts of the unit

TEACHERS

Design and submit conceptual models for the kit

Write a teaching guide for the kit

Assemble teacher/learner instructional materials for the kit

Monitor the work of other project groups

Write evaluative materials for use in the kit.

Work cooperatively with other group members

Establish criteria for judging an acceptable kit

Arrive at consensus as to what is appropriate for classrooms given resource and time constraints

CONTENT CONSULTANTS

To check the validity of the content

To check suggested content for bias, stereotypes, misinformation, and balance

To suggest or provide appropriate resource material or personnel

Assumptions About Team Members

For a mutualistic approach to program development to be successful team members must act upon certain assumptions about other members of the developmental team. The Canadian Content Project appeared to make the following assumptions about participants:

CONSULTANTS- ALBERTA EDUCATION	TEACHERS
Had a current working knowledge of social studies practice	Have a current working knowledge of social studies practice
Were acquainted with a wide range of materials appropriate for a variety of teachers	Were able to write program materials for a diverse group of teachers ranging from experts to the unsophisticated
Had the human relation skills required to help motivate and encourage team members	Able to work well with 4-6 colleagues on a cooperative project under trying conditions
Had as a primary interest the development of high quality instructional programs	Were sufficiently confident of their own basic ability that they could profit by and accept criticism of ideas
Had recognized expertise in working on curriculum projects	Had as primary goal the production of high quality instructional materials for children
Had successful classroom experience in the social studies	Had access to materials and opportunities to alleviate any knowledge or skill deficits prior to project commencement
Had expertise in the technical aspects of program construction, e.g., formats, internal consistency, components, strategies	Possessed the human relations skills which would allow them to work as inservice consultants with the new materials produced
	Had a sound knowledge of the appropriateness of instructional sequences for specific groups of children

TRUSTEES

Reflected the "public" viewpoint as to what is appropriate for students

Had the power to influence attitudes, to procure resources, and to gain acceptance for the program.

Would work as active team members

STUDENTS

Had the ability to judge what is appropriate for fellow students

Would be accepted as equal working partners by other participating groups.

PARENTS

Had the ability to judge what is appropriate for students

Would be accepted as equal working partners by other participating groups

Would work as active team members

CONTENT CONSULTANTS

Had expertise which was relevant and applicable to instructional programs

What Was

How well did the attempt to use a mutualistic approach to program development work? For most of the kits the major developmental tasks were assumed and completed by the teacher members of the teams. Their perceptions of the project are given below.

Advantages for Team Members:

Why They Participated

The vast majority of respondents classified their reasons for participating as either relating to a belief that such participation would constitute a broadening 'learning experience' or to an interest in or curiosity about the curriculum development process. Other comments demonstrated beliefs in the following: a need for increased Canadian content in social studies; a need for teaching kits/materials; a need to participate because of expected professional rewards or actual roles; the respondent's having 'something to offer' to such a project.

Satisfaction Level

All but a few respondents felt that their expectations had been fulfilled in the project. They indicated satisfactions as:

(a) Professional growth

The majority of respondents felt that their understanding of social studies, the difficulties of curriculum development, and group/individual planning and development skills were greatly enhanced by their involvement. In other words, the opportunity to help develop curriculum provided what many termed an in-service "learning experience".

(b) Needed materials for students

Nearly half the respondents expressed satisfaction in being involved with a curriculum project which would produce accessible, relevant, and very useable social studies materials for Alberta classroom use. The teachers' faith in the products being acceptable to other Alberta teachers (because of local developer involvement) was stated several times.

(c) "Grassroots" program development

Tapping teacher expertise, rather than a university's or an education department's, seemed pleasing to a sizeable group (about 30%) of respondents.

(d) Involvement of the local community

Two respondents (members of the same team which sought to follow the mutualistic model of curriculum development within their community) cited the involvement of the community as the overall strength of the process.

How Obligations Were Met:

(a) Students

Most developers responded positively to the involvement of students in kit development. However, all but one of these positive responses cast students in the roles of providing early feedback on proposed topics or teaching strategies (i.e., a formative evaluation procedure); or contributing art work or materials to be incorporated into the kits. The remaining positive response cited students as heavily involved as "resource-gatherers"; the unit developed was linked, unsurprisingly, to the respondent's previously-displayed understanding of a criterion for this development project: heavy community involvement.

(b) Parents

The majority of respondents disclaimed the involvement of parents in development. Those respondents who did report parent involvement cited various levels of involvement: from "attendance at a couple of meetings" (which was the most prevalent response) and acting as resource persons, to the very active involvement of parents in the one group project cited in (a) above.

(c) Administrators

Nearly a third of the respondents made no comment on administrator role. Those who did respond were equally split in their perception of administrators having played any role in development. Those who did respond positively to administrators having a role in

development cited provision of general technical support services as the key role. Mentioned were: help from consultants; provision of release time and funds by local board; provision of typing services and meeting places; and use of resource materials.

(d) Trustees

Trustee role was typified as being rather outside the realm of actual development, as in the case of administrators (c) above. While a fair number of respondents reported trustee involvement, that involvement was recorded either as attendance at a "couple", "some", and "all the team's meetings", or as simply being supportive of the project, and showing that support by approving funding or providing release time for teachers. Again, nearly a third of the respondents did not comment on trustee role.

In only one team's case, a single trustee was involved in all development meetings, and was considered to be an integral part of the team.

(e) Community Agencies

Community agencies were not generally involved in the development of kits. The exception to this finding becomes evident when dealing with responses from teams working with topics of an historical nature - in these cases, the Glenbow Institute and other such archival institutions played a large role in providing information and materials.

(f) Alberta Education

The roles of Alberta Education representatives as portrayed by respondents covered a wide range - with perceptions forming what could be termed a "facilitation continuum".

Some teachers viewed Alberta Education as having either a low or a high facilitative role in the development of the kits. The following comments are illustrative of the two extreme portrayals on the continuum:

Low "The project directors were often flying by the seat of their pants."

"Their role was one of restricting and confining...our activity and the content... Their role (was) one of censorship rather than assisting in the development of the units."

High "Our consultants were great. In fact, they are an integral part of our team."

"Facilitators in getting us started and in maintaining the program once it was begun."

"They provided us with an opportunity to explain our unit to someone."

Most teacher responses fell between these two extremes. Although many Alberta Education representatives were not involved in actual kit development, those representatives who were involved showed great commitment to, and interest in, the project. As one respondent wrote, "More than once, two consultants drove 200-300 miles for a two hour visit."

The majority of the respondents perceived the role of Alberta Education to be one of providing motivational support. Only in a few cases was Alberta Education perceived by teachers to be directly involved in the developmental task. A few teams

Alberta Education's involvement in:	Yes	No
- Providing motivational support	84%	16%
- determining unit topic	28%	72%
- selecting unit objectives	39%	61%
- outlining unit format	39%	61%
- determing unit content	30%	70%
- developing instructional strategies	27%	73%
- writing parts of the unit	19%	81%

N = 32

had Alberta Education representatives fully involved in some or all aspects of kit development, while the remaining teams reported little or no Alberta Education role besides providing motivation. This would suggest a confusion regarding what the role of Alberta Education representatives should exactly have been, both on the parts of the developing teams and the Alberta Education representatives.

Future Involvement

Less than one-third of the respondents indicated their willingness to participate in such a curriculum development project again under the same conditions.

Of the majority who rejected participation in such a project again, the following statements are representative:

"It is almost impossible to work piecemeal throughout a year at this type of work. You run into difficulties at your own school and also in maintaining interest in the project."

"We ended up doing a tremendous amount of research, writing our own material, condensing from other materials. All our holidays, weekends, and after-school time were spent on it. It took far more time than was anticipated."

"I believe that my primary responsibility is my students. I do not like to leave my class on and off as we did. I had to spend a lot of time making sure the lessons were planned."

"Our mutualistic approach was a very inefficient way of developing curriculum. It often led to frustrations when consensus just didn't seem to be possible."

"...(need) more explicit directions from the beginning of the project..."

"The financial arrangements were not sufficient."

One other respondent, while also rejecting future participation in a similar project, injected an optimistic and future-oriented thought by writing:

"...we can use this experience to improve the type of leadership provided, and to make available greater monetary and time resources to the teams in future projects."

What Should Be Done Next Time

Asked if the method used in the project should be used again, developers responded:

(a) No	3
(b) Yes, as is	0
(c) Yes, with revisions	29

Those respondents selecting option (c) suggested improvement of the method in the following ways:

(a) Provide more definitive initial guidance and establishment of concrete criteria by Alberta Education.

Representative statements:

"Be more specific in scope and sequence - at least provide a working outline which could be revised by the total group."

"...(suggest) one person in charge of overall plan knowing exactly what he wants. This should be communicated to the people working on it in strong terms."

"Have the project leaders establish a framework - albeit general in nature - to assist the teams in their work."

"...(suggest) firm guidelines to be established prior to teams coming together."

"People had an opportunity to grow through the experience; however, no time was spent in showing what a good unit is or how it might be built. Therefore, the professional growth possibilities were not maximized."

"Can waste a good deal of time doing things by trial and error. The developing process and materials may be useful in the future. However, in terms of finishing a kit, you may lose a great deal of time."

"Too much is left to chance. If we have come up with a good kit, it may be more by good luck than good management. We were all rank amateurs...when it came to doing this sort of thing."

"Representatives from the government seem to be afraid that any criticism of the units will be directed at them, and as a result, they are reluctant to allow new and innovative ways of presenting material."

"The consultants (should) be prepared to express their opinions in detail on the content, strengths, and weaknesses of the unit. It was frustrating to have something prepared and ready for criticism and have none come - either good or bad."

(b) Allow more teacher release time, in concentrated blocks, for development.

Representative statements:

"...(suggest) the project be started and completed within a more concentrated period of time. By overlapping two separate school years, your responsibilities can change and the project tends to suffer as a result."

"Teachers need much more time off from regular classroom activities to engage themselves in research and actual development of the unit."

"Difficulties arose regarding release time from teaching duties. Would have worked better if the initial program had been completed in the summer of 1976."

"The time line was too condensed. All members of our team are full-time teachers, and found this additional task very demanding because it was to be completed so soon."

"Teachers should be contracted for six months to one year for the purposes of curriculum development only."

"We never at any time knew exactly what was expected of us. Each department person we met with gave us a different view in trying to clarify this point. We were in a state of confusion much of the time."

"When members of Alberta Education generate ideas of this type, it would facilitate the development of the curriculum if all the parameters are identified at the outset. Far too much time was wasted doing and re-doing.

"...(allow) teams of teachers to be sprung free from classroom duties for duration of the project. It is too much to do both at the same time."

"...a block of time, say a month, should have been taken. That way a substitute becomes totally responsible for plans and checking. Better still, the months of July or August might attract teachers for this purpose."

(c) Provide more funds for complete development.

Representative statements:

"The whole funding procedure got "screwed up" - boards and superintendents obviously varied in their concept of commitment (ours even charged us for paper)."

"...if the Department of Education counts these as units of importance, perhaps more financial assistance could be appropriated. When we got down to "rock bottom" - finally our school board supplemented our project. I feel when we have the interested people - who give of their time above and beyond the call of duty - expenses should be one of our minor concerns."

(d) Provide more meetings/closer liaison with project directors, consultants, other experts during development.

Representative statements:

"...(suggest) a few more meetings of all the teams or more visits from Edmonton, so that we would know whether or not our particular part of the project was "measuring up", i.e., a better overall view of the whole project."

"Perhaps, instead of scheduling the odd day, now and then, for "work days", we could ask for longer periods of time (less often), so that there would be better continuity of thought and development. I, for one, found it rather hectic trying to put together material for thought when meetings were so hit and miss."

"At this point in time, we are waiting for the evaluating team to look at our unit and wondering if revisions will be required. This evaluation could have been an ongoing process, thus reducing the frustration of wondering whether or not the unit is acceptable."

(e) Devise a selection mechanism that ensures the inclusion of experienced curriculum-builders on development teams.

Representative statements:

"...develop some criteria of selection for screening potential curriculum developers."

"If one grew through this experience, it was through your own efforts - not because you were associated with or exposed to top-notch curriculum builders/procedures."

"Each team should have at least one "expert" in curriculum. Teams should be selected for their proven expertise, and each team should draw in some less expert teachers."

"Final product quality depends so much on the ability of the committee."

(f) Provide more assistance/information regarding technical aspects of kit development.

Representative statements:

"We could have used a great deal more help in the technical aspects of the production of the prototype kits."

"...(provide) real assistance in technical matters. For example, copyrights, if obtained,have not been sorted out yet. Also, production of materials was largely left to the teams who do not have skill in this area - involve ACCESS to its full potential."

(g) Make provision for teams geographically isolated from resources.

Representative statements:

"Divisions such as ours are far away from resource materials and personnel."

"Unit may be too localized, i.e., content of local interest only."

"...writing in a vacuum, that is, out of touch geographically with director and education consultants as well as not being able to travel to research."

Accounting for Discrepancies

Discrepancies are evident among the notions of mutualism as defined, perceived, and implemented. The department of education prescribed a mutualistic approach as an alternative to the present hierarchical method of program development, whereas most of the participating teams viewed the process of program development as still largely hierarchical; as an outcome of this discrepancy, a random approach to developing programs was actually experienced by participants. The original intent of mutualism, co-activity, and decentralization was lost as each of the thirteen teams developed their own individualized style of constructing programs. Randomness resulted, and any resemblance within this process to a mutualistic approach was more accidental than purposeful.

Why were these discrepancies evident? At least two fundamental alternative explanations are possible:

1. A mutualistic approach to local program development is not workable. It cannot be implemented practically for constructing curriculum because of the nature of the task.
2. Mutualism was never really implemented because the approach was not well understood by the participating groups.

The first alternative has little supporting evidence; the approach has been used successfully for developing curriculum elsewhere. Rather, it would appear that there was insufficient conceptual understanding, developmental guidelines, and ongoing monitoring provided while the process was underway.

These discrepancies can possibly be accounted for because the groups involved in part failed to fulfill obligations expected within mutualism or acted on unwarranted assumptions.

Questions are raised as to how well the initiators of the project (Alberta Education) met their obligations to the project and may have acted upon unwarranted assumptions.

1. Obligations:

Did Alberta Education have an obligation to outline what they saw as the tasks of each of the groups involved?

Teachers in the project felt strongly that they should have been provided more information by Alberta Education at the initial organization meetings. Eighty-five percent of the teachers surveyed expressed this feeling with comments such as:

"The directions might have been useful but to myself and others of my group it was very confusing."

"Frustration was the word."

"I was frustrated by my own ignorance, compared with advance preparation of other teams, and by the apparent lack of leadership."

"A very vague and disappointing session."

"Was as useful as a wart on a hog's back."

Did Alberta Education have an obligation to provide criteria which would guide development of the kits?

Seventy-six percent of the teacher developers surveyed felt that Alberta supplied insufficient criteria to assist them in the development of their kit. Eighty-eight percent of them understood that the kits were to be designed using the Alberta Social Studies program handbooks as a guide. However, the assumption by Alberta Education that team members were conversant with the ideas in the two official program guides seems to have been unwarranted. Both the Downey Report on the Social Studies (1975) and the formative evaluation of these kits seem to indicate that teachers in general are not aware of the program's intent.

Did Alberta Education have an obligation to ascertain the suitability of development team members for the task of creating Canadian Content Kits?

Teachers involved in the project seemed to possess varying degrees of expertise related to the social studies. Of the teachers surveyed, 26% were trained in other fields such as mathematics or science; 7% considered themselves generalists as opposed to social studies specialists; 22% identified themselves with history or specific social science disciplines. Clearly such a diverse group could be expected to hold divergent views on almost every aspect of the project. How much contemporary knowledge they possessed in the area of social studies is a matter of speculation.

Selection criteria could be applied also to all participating groups. For instance, this would include trustees and consultants as well. The most successful projects were those in which all individuals viewed themselves as active group members.

Did Alberta Education consultants and directors have an obligation to provide development teams with information related to current social studies materials and practice?

The role of consultants varied dramatically from group to group:

"We could not have done without---and---. (Lethbridge Regional Office)."

"In a word their help was invaluable."

"In our experience, they have been non-involved. Even at the Providence Center and Yellowhead Conferences they seemed to 'stick to themselves'."

"The primary role seemed to be one to frustrate us."

"The Lethbridge regional office gave us two wonderful people who were of immeasurable help. Our department people were great!"

"The primary role (of consultants) seemed to be one to frustrate us."

These quotes seem to reflect the diverse reactions to individual consultants. Teachers were most supportive of those consultants who became integral team members, and teachers were most critical of the consultants who made "visits" to the project.

The consulting force as a whole was most successful at providing encouragement, and was least successful in providing groups with social studies expertise and information. There were team members with fuzzy or limited notions of unit formats, criteria for selecting content, specific instructional strategies, and other common "tools" of program development.

Did Alberta Education have an obligation to monitor the educational quality of the kits as they were being developed?

By definition, formative evaluation must be continuous. The success of program development depends often upon the mechanisms which are built into the process for providing feedback and direction to all participants. Quality controls are necessary.

It may neither be sufficient nor fair to bring in external evaluators at the conclusion of a project. As long as evaluation is treated as an appendage to the development task, its contributions remain minimal. Further, developers may even view it as a threat to what they have already successfully constructed; at that point they may rightly view evaluation personnel as outsiders who do not really understand what was done and whose comments can be accepted as being largely irrelevant. Evaluation sessions may become conflict situations in which there is argument and counter-argument, defense and attack, and in which all participants become naturally defensive and uneasy. Follow-up activities may be absent. On the other hand, if evaluation is continuous and if the evaluators are viewed as an integral part of the development team, the task does not become threatening or conjure up unproductive conflict. There needs to be critical input, constructive alternatives, and technical expertise all along the way in program construction.

Another mechanism for formative evaluation is the continuous piloting of materials. This is a weak aspect in much program development because many busy teachers are happy to have something new provided for ready use in the classroom; their responses are positive generally to what they are given to teach. At times, therefore, not only must attention be given to criteria for selecting pilot teachers, but also to making very specific the criteria by which these teachers are to judge a program. Unsatisfactory results are often obtained by just requesting that pilot teachers keep a diary of their experience with a program, that they write comments on the materials, that they provide written suggestions for improvements, or that they complete a questionnaire. Some of these teacher comments tend to be too general to be useful in revising a curriculum. Often these pilot teachers just need more direction as to what specifically are useful data for guiding the revision tasks.

Other ways to monitor the educational quality of programs include continuous workshops in which developers are given a variety of professional inputs. They can discuss new developments in their field and be exposed to various projects, kits, formats, and professional literature. Opportunity must be provided somehow for the continuous contact and development of new ideas from the beginning to the end of any curriculum development.

2. Assumptions:

   Were the assumptions held by Alberta Education about the social studies expertise of the various groups involved in the project warranted?

The evaluation of the thirteen kits raised a number of questions about their congruency with current social studies practice and the Alberta Social Studies Program. For example, twenty major questions were posed about the fit of kits in one division with the Provincial social studies handbook. This discrepancy raises a question concerning the working knowledge of social studies

which some participants seemed to have. Also, the lack of strong linkages among objectives, strategies, and content within most kits lends further support to the suspicion that many developers would have benefited from some initial inservice sessions on curriculum development.

Were the assumptions underlying a mutualistic approach appropriate for the context in which Alberta Education applied this model?

There are approaches appropriate for different contexts and purposes. If a method is not congruent with the purpose to which it is put, the tool may be asked to do things of which it is not capable. Assumptions about resource availability, time constraints, ends-means relationships, personnel expertise and roles, and product outcomes underlie any approach to program development. If these method assumptions are at variance with the intended outcome of a project, then either method or purpose has to be rethought.

Alberta Education seemed to put demands upon the program development project which were not consistent with the mutualistic approach. Why were thirteen teams be made to fit the same timelines? Why were criteria for evaluation devised and applied to the kits after they were developed? Why were guidelines for the development, scope and sequence, and format of kits not made explicit initially? It would appear that at times a hierarchical approach was superimposed upon the teams in terms of the expectations held by the department of education.

Before any approach is adopted, certain questions should be asked: Why do we intend to use this method? Is it best suited to our expectations and purposes? How are we to monitor the effectiveness of the approach in terms of our ongoing interests?

SECTION III: FOR CONSIDERATION

The Approach as Perceived by Participants: Hierarchical

Perceptions concerning what was the model of mutualism varied greatly among the participating groups. The thirteen development teams, the trustees, and the consultants who were involved did not appear to perceive co-activity and decentralization in the same manner.

The greatest amount of confusion seems to have been with the development team members. They were acquainted with the proper jargon of the approach, but there was little evidence that most of them understood mutualism. In fact, many of their expectations expressed about the department of education revealed an underlying hierarchical model of program development. They perceived the locus of power in decision making as resting with the social studies experts within the department of education. As a consequence, these teachers kept looking and asking for direction from these curriculum experts. For some teams it became like a game in which they had to guess what the administrators within the department of education really had in mind.

Further, the majority of teams did not share their power with students, community or minority groups, department of education consultants, or trustees. They alone selected and ordered the goals, content, and activities which they considered to be relevant to students. Though they used the language of mutualism when discussing the process with outsiders, many of the team members perceived the model in a hierarchical producer-consumer paradigm.

The Approach as Experienced in Actuality: Randomness

There were as many approaches to local program development as there were development teams. And even within one team itself, members would differ in the manner in which they operationalized their tasks. Some teams worked closely together as a group, mutually developing their intents and materials. At the other extreme, group members worked as individuals in virtual isolation from one another; each person developed his own program and became committed to it. Only one development team utilized the mutualistic approach as prescribed by the department of education; student, parent, teacher, and local community and business groups were involved in all aspects of developing the curriculum. Although several groups had token parents or trustees on their groups initially, the teachers involved did not perceive this arrangement as satisfactory. Even the many governmental consultants associated with the project tended to interpret and implement the notion of mutualism differently. A question arises, therefore, as to what approach to program development was implemented and operationalized.

In answer, it would seem that a random rather than a mutualistic approach to curriculum development was utilized for the project. Each development team interpreted the intent of mutualism and defined their tasks in their own individual ways. The parameters and the guidelines provided to them by the department of education were interpreted and implemented in a random fashion, and there was little evidence that the teams understood the idea of mutualistic program development. Rather, each group developed curriculum in their own ways, and the only conclusion which can be made is that there were thirteen different approaches in operation. And since the outcomes of a random approach are of necessity divergent, basic questions became problematic concerning the overall fit (scope and sequence) of the programs with one another and concerning

their congruence with the Alberta Social Studies Program.

If a mutualistic approach is used again in the future to develop programs, the following questions should be considered.

1. Should groups at the initial meeting co-operatively define roles, obligations, and rights?
2. Should groups have jointly established criteria by which the programs could be judged?
3. Should criteria be established initially for selecting participants of all groups involved?
4. Should an inservice program be designed to ensure that all participant have exposure to current knowledge, techniques, orientations, and materials relevant to their projects.
5. Should the applicability of various approaches to program development be explored in order to ascertain their possible fit for divergent purposes and within various contexts?

APPENDIX 1

Development Team Member Letter and Survey

APPENDIX 2

Alberta Education Consultant Letter and Survey